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07

URARTU AS EMPIRE
CULTURAL INTEGRATION IN THE KINGDOM OF VAN

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Political effectiveness and governmental stability are neglected themes in the study of Urartu and, given the kingdom's modern standing as a thoroughly 'lost' civilization, it may seem somewhat eccentric to dwell on its erstwhile ability to direct the activities of its population. The eloquence of Assyrian sources in describing Urartian defeats has no doubt contributed to the view of a rather hapless monarchy suffering one reverse after another. Nevertheless, two hundred years of sustained sovereignty and managerial effectiveness over an extensive, diverse, and previously unruly territory ranks as one of the more masterful imperial enterprises of the ancient world. The circumstance that modern scholars have had to revive Urartu's memory after twenty-six centuries of stony sleep simply reinforces the significance of the Urartian accomplishment: its government exercised its power in an area where it is otherwise difficult to maintain and foster a stream of tradition, and where continuity is hardly the watchword. No state based there has matched the strength, productivity and coherence of the Urartian kingdom until modern times.

The system behind this Urartian success is understood at only the most superficial level. We know that Urartu was a monarchy and, like its Assyrian neighbor, launched military campaigns under royal direction on an annual basis for the sake of plunder and territorial gain. Fortresses, irrigation works, and other construction projects were initiated by the king and built on a grand scale that speaks for control of significant resources and manpower. There was a close association of rulers with a state religion, which elevated a previously obscure god, Haldi, to leadership of the pantheon and stood behind a claim to apparently universal territorial authority. Urartian kings constructed and dedicated temples of a distinctive form within royal fortresses and marked sacred locations elsewhere with their inscriptions. With rare exceptions, Urartian documentary evidence itself is a royal creation, if not a royal monopoly, and gives us a fair perspective on the official activities of the king.

Outside the field of vision provided to us by Urartian monarchs, we see only shadows. We know there were provincial governors, but our understanding of their spheres of authority comes almost entirely from Assyrian records composed over only a few years in the late eighth century BC. Most of the officials with whom the Assyrians were concerned in these documents were operating in border areas and buffer states, and thus may not have behaved in ways typical of regional authorities in other, more central areas of Biainili. Of the people the Urartian king governed and of the operations of government at the lowest level we have only the most fragmentary information.

It is in these lower levels of decision-making that Urartu's status as an empire must be evaluated. Was it highly integrated with central authorities intervening in all aspects daily life, or was it more hegemonic in the sense of leaving political and cultural choices in many, dispersed hands? Was it an empire at all? In summarizing various definitions of empire in the context of archaeology, Carla Sinopoli (1994: 160) stressed this issue of internal diversity:

> They [definitions of empire in historical and anthropological literature] share in common a view of empire as a territorially expansive and incorporative kind of state, involving relationships in which one state exercises control over other sociopolitical entities (e.g. states, chiefdoms, non-stratified societies), and of imperialism as the process of creating and maintaining empires. The diverse polities and communities that constitute an empire typically retain some degree of autonomy – in self- and centrally-defined cultural identity, and in some dimensions of political and economic decision making.

While the archaeological assemblage produced by the direct action of the Urartian government still provides a veneer of uniformity throughout the territory in which it appears, my argument here is that there are archaeological and philological grounds for recognizing that more than one cultural group existed within the state and that there were variations in the relationships between different groups of people within the state and the government. The most recent archaeological findings also make it clear that Urartian governmental practices in the floruit of Rusa, son of Argišti, were different from those under earlier kings. Each new discovery adds weight to the claim that Biainili was in fact an empire in the sense that the term is conventionally applied to ancient polities.

Before turning to this issue of internal diversity, however, let us first consider some of the other defining qualities of empire. These include extensive territory, usually acquired by conquest, a sovereign at the core, and a certain durability. A state that controlled most of eastern Anatolia and adjacent areas meets the first criterion. Centralized leadership by an emperor was supplied by the succession kings from Sarduri I through Rusa, son of Argišti[1] and seems to have been reasonably orderly.[2] Perhaps it continued through the reigns of several others, about whom we are poorly informed, in the latter part of the 7th century. This span is more than sufficient to establish that the Urartian state had some sort of durable institutional basis and was not an ephemeral personal creation like the 'empire' of Attila the Hun. On these points there can be little dispute and, indeed, I am not aware of any place in scholarly literature where the notion that the kingdom of Urartu (i.e. Biainili) was indeed an empire has been explicitly denied.[3] On the other hand, it is seldom acknowledged.

If empires are also to be associated with internal political and cultural diversity, this is the one facet of conventional definitions by which Urartu's claim might be challenged. The archaeology of Urartu projects an appearance of extraordinary uniformity within the boundaries of the state. To a certain extent one may explain this as a consequence of the concerns of archaeologists, who have focused their attention on what may be termed the 'state assemblage' (Zimansky 1995d). Excavations of fortresses, which are what have generated most of the artifacts we regard as Urartian, yield military equipment, royal inscriptions, official art, and things used by people associated with the state. This kind of material is not necessarily a product of a long cultural tradition, but rather something created by decisions at the top. It is an assemblage that came into existence in a very short period of time when the state of Biainili was created and lost its *raison d'être* when the state disappeared. But the priorities of archaeologists alone cannot account for the overwhelming pervasiveness of these artifacts in Urartian territory.

How much of a common culture was there behind this military veneer? Was Biainili essentially a command structure, which assembled and organized miscellaneous cultural elements, or did there exist a set of beliefs

[1] The conventional understanding of the line of succession from the last quarter of the 8th century until the end of the kingdom has been challenged in the light of recent discoveries, and alternatives are weighed in the contributions of Fuchs, Kroll, Roaf, Salvini, and Seidl in this volume Chapters 08, 09, 12, 13, and 14. Despite the uncertainties, there is no indication of more than momentary interruption of centralized authority before the middle of the 7th century. Our primary index of the effective power of individual reigns rests on their production of royal building projects documented by display inscriptions, which were presumably not generated in times of instability. By this standard, the high-water mark of the monarchy's power was the reign of Rusa, son of Argišti, who, not insignificantly, was also probably the last king to leave any record of royal activity.

[2] In the absence of a king list for Biainili, we have no official version of the order of succession and indeed no indication other than the use of patronymics and recurrence of royal names to indicate there was a recognized line of legitimate transition of authority. The sequence of rulers as we reconstruct it by chaining names and patronymics from individual surviving royal inscriptions may in fact have been less neat in reality. It is curious that the patronymic, which is formed by adding the suffix *-hi* to the predecessor's nomen, e.g. Sarduri Argištihi ("Sarduri son of Argišti") is only used for kings and does not appear with other individuals, with the exception of those bearing the title ^{lú}*Asuli*, whose names are royal in any case. That aside, there are a few instances in which there seem to have been some irregularities in the sequence. For example, Inušpua, son of Minua, seems to have been in line to rule during Minua's lifetime, but Minua's successor was ultimately Argišti. Any ordering of the various Rusas (Rusa Erimenahi, Rusa Sardurihi, and Rusa Argištihi) involves broken links in the father to son succession. The unresolved issue of whether the names used by rulers in royal inscriptions were throne names further complicates the picture. It would also appear that there was some confusion around the time of Sargon's 8th campaign, including an outright revolt by an individual known to us only in an Assyrian letter (Lanfranchi 1983).

[3] Bernbeck (2003-2004a), in positing that Biainili was a segmentary state in the 9th and 8th centuries, might be construed as offering such a challenge implicitly, but it does not come from the perspective of seeing Urartu as a homogeneous kingdom. His argument is discussed below.

and practices shared by a substantial percentage of the population within the borders of the state that gave its people a cultural identity that we may call Urartian? What we know as the 'Urartian' language, for example, is not given a name by any ancient source. It was first written in inscriptions of the kings of Biainili at the end of the 9th century BC and is presumed to be the native language of that dynasty and indisputably the language of the government. It is quite another matter to assume that it was the sole or even the predominant language spoken in the territory that the Assyrians called Urartu. It was certainly the official language of the rulers of the state: they are the only ones producing inscriptions. How many people actually spoke Urartian? Not enough that anyone felt the need to write in the language after the fall of Biainili. If one entertains the thesis that this was simply the language of a small military elite, perhaps from the vicinity of Musasir, who took advantage of the defensive potential of the Van basin in forming the state, there is no reason to believe that it was at all common. By the same token, the earlier cultural traditions in the Van area may not have been particularly important in shaping the collective lives of the people who were the subjects of Biainili overall. The same can be said for virtually all aspects of what we regard as Urartian culture.

I do not put forward the latter hypothesis as anything remotely close to a certainty, but argue that it bears looking into and that it is no less solid than what we might call the conventional belief that the Urartians were a people who created a state roughly conterminous with their ethno-linguistic boundaries. And, of course, there is broad spectrum of viable possibilities between the poles of narrow command structure and broadly shared culture. In any case, the issue of how much cultural diversity there was among the Urartians is vital to understanding how its political system actually worked.

Imperial aspects of the formation of Biainili

One impediment to conceptualizing Biainili as an empire is the confusion introduced by the non-political referents of the term "Urarṭu" and its variants (Uruaṭri, Uraṭri, Uraštu). Scholarly treatments of the history of Urartu generally begin by chronicling Middle and early Neo-Assyrian campaigns against Uruaṭri and Nairi before discussing the emergence of the dynasty that was to rule Biainili and the foundation of the capital at Van. Continuity between these is presumed because the Assyrian geographical connotations of the term eventually blend into the political. Failing to make a distinction, however, introduces some unwarranted assumptions about the origins and nature of the state of Biainili. These include geographical as well as the linguistic issues noted above. It would undoubtedly streamline the discussion if one kept the term Urartu entirely separate from the more politically and temporally specific Biainili – the name of the domain ruled by the dynasty established at Van by Sarduri I – but unfortunately our ancient sources do not. While the kings of Biainili themselves almost never called their realm Urartu,[4] the Assyrians and everyone else in the ancient Near East did, and modern academic literature follows the Assyrians.

If it is not practical to change the terminology at this point, one must nevertheless avoid transposing assumptions implicit in the geographical or cultural uses uncritically to the political sphere. Similarly, theories of political evolution from tribes to empire based on Assyrian references from the Middle Assyrian period must be recognized as contingent upon equating the terms Uruatri and Urartu over a long span and may have no relevance to the way that Biainili was actually formed.[5]

The circumstantial case for a quite disparate population substrate in Urartu stems from the speed with which the state was created. One can follow the radiation of Urartian royal inscriptions outward from the capital, reign by reign. Biainili moved from being a local kingdom on the shores of Lake Van to a regional

[4] Toward the end of the 8th century, Urartian kings do, on rare occasions, employ the logogram ^{KUR}URI, which we read Urartu, as a designation of their land in Assyrian versions of bilingual texts, where it corresponds to Biainili in the Urartian verison. The earliest Urartian kings (Sarduri I, Išpuini + Minua), however, instead employ the term Nairi to refer to their domain when writing in Akkadian.

[5] Kroll's argument (this volume Chapter 10) that the original core territory of the state lay in north-western Iran rather than the Van basin is a case in point. If accepted, and there is no evidence to rule it out, the archaeological record of developments in the Van area, so often invoked in seeking the origin of the Urartian state, is less relevant than that of the area north and immediately west of Lake Urmia.

power within about fifty years. Population growth could not have kept pace with this expansion, so if there was cultural unity in the area of political control, it would have had to have been there before the state reached its more or less permanent frontiers. This is an assumption that is implicit in the view of those who begin the history of Urartu with the first textual references to Uruatri in Middle Assyrian texts, but it would seem more likely that Biainili was put together through the traditional pattern of conquest and incorporation seen in Assyria and other ancient Near Eastern states. By the testimony of their own inscriptions, the Urartians moved large numbers of people around after their military victories, but they also probably left a good many in place. The booty lists of Minua, Argišti I, and Sarduri II (the only ones we have) give totals of between roughly 6,000 and 53,000 human prisoners of various categories per campaign.[6] The number of human captives is listed first in each entry on plunder, and apparently was the chief index of military success. Impressive and no doubt exaggerated as these numbers are, they can in no way account for the entire population of eastern Anatolia at the time.

It is presumed that these captives were resettled within the kingdom and we have one instance in which this is stated explicitly: Argišti I's claim to have brought 6,600 individuals from Hate and Supani at the founding of Erebuni (UKN 128 A2 22, CTU A 8-1 Vo). These people would certainly have constituted a substantial foreign enclave at the site, and it has been suggested that the deity to whom the Erebuni temple was dedicated, ^{D}Iarša, was a Luwian import for their benefit (Melikišvili 1958).

The meager 8th century evidence that we have for the second level of governmental authority also suggests a persistence of diversity. Urartian inscriptions are sparing in their references to governors. It may be significant that the only one whose personal name is given in an Urartian text is the first we hear of, a certain Titia who was installed in the vicinity of Bağın in one of Minua's campaigns in the west (UKN 42, CTU A 5-8). Argišti I reports deposing four kings and replacing them with governors (UKN 128 B1 15-17, CTU A 8-2 Vo). In later reigns the number of governors called up for a campaign is used as an index of military force applied by the king. In one instance Sarduri II says he summoned three of them for an attack on Uiteruhi (UKN 155 D 19, CTU A 9-3 III), and in another he proudly says he didn't use any at all to conquer Uelikuhi (UKN 155 F 15-17, CTU A 9-3 VI). The Assyrians also seem to use this measure in their espionage reports, recording numbers of governors called up, or in the case of Urartu's Cimmerian debacle, defeated. The governors have their own troops, and can, on occasion, act independently of the Urartian king.

Evidence for any kind of decentralization in Biainili is much harder to come by in the 7th century, and particularly in the time of Rusa, son of Argišti. It is clear that there was a significant restructuring of the kingdom around the beginning of the second quarter of the century and that the result of this was the creation of the largest and most complex Urartian archaeological sites: Bastam, Ayanis, Karmir Blur, and Kef Kalesi.[7] These were associated with extra-mural settlement areas of a type little known in the kingdom previously (Zimansky 2005). Most of the artifacts that we associate with the Urartian bureaucracy, such as cylinder seals, clay tablets, and bullae, come from these sites. Perhaps significantly, we hear very little of Urartian governors in this phase of Urartu's history. One cannot entirely refute the explanation that this is due to focus of archaeology on 7th century sites – how much digging has there actually been in 8th century contexts, after all? The distribution of Rusa's major sites, most of which were within sight of already existing Urartian centers and in territory well within the frontiers of kingdom, suggests that he really was reshaping the government and concentrating population in an unprecedented way. It may be that he was attempting to counter just the local bases of power that we have been discussing.

[6] See Zimansky 1985: 58 for a table summarizing Urartian booty lists.

[7] In earlier assessments of this building program (e.g. Zimansky 1995c) the list of major building projects also included Toprakkale. The evidence indicating that Rusa Erimenahi was the author of the Keşiş Göl inscription, which Mirjo Salvini presented at the symposium, and thus the founder of Rusahinili convinces me that Toprakkale was not created by Rusa, son of Argišti. The chronological issues are discussed elsewhere in this volume. Assigning the foundation to Rusa, son of Erimena, clarifies many anomalies. It would have been the only one of Rusa Argištihi's major centers without an obvious outer town connected to it, and indeed without a major fortification wall. We are also spared the embarrassment of a king giving the same name to two sites, and the distinction between Rusahinili Qilbanikai (Toprakkale) and Rusahinili Eidurukai (Ayanis) appears to have been made only after the founding of Ayanis by Rusa, son of Argišti.

Religion in imperial policy

In a pair of provocative articles, Reinhard Bernbeck has recently argued for extremely decentralized power in 9th and 8th century Biainili, seeing the kingdom as a loose collection of smaller political units linked together by a king with quite circumscribed powers (Bernbeck 2003-2004a: 44-48; 2003-2004b: 267-272). The centralized, bureaucratic monarchy seen in the archaeology of kingdom under Rusa, son of Argišti, in his view, is something fundamentally different from what went before (2003-2004b: 268). The distribution of fortifications suggests to him 'a rather high frequency of political conflict within the kingdom, probably made possible by a weak central power of the Urartian kings' (2003-2004a: 46). Bernbeck proposes that the earlier kingdom was a segmentary state (2003-2004b: 274-279), a polity held together by the ideological authority, but not by the direct command, of the king. He sees religion as the primary unifying force of the kingdom and the source from which the Urartian king derived what little authority he had. While in my view the archaeological evidence argues against this extreme position,[8] there can be no doubt that Bernbeck is correct in emphasizing the importance of the Urartian religion as a window on the balance between central power and local belief systems in Biainili.

The idea that Urartian royal power was built on the foundation of a widely shared religion, however, seems dubious. The monarchy of Biainili appeared at Van before the god with which it is most intimately associated, Haldi. Salvini has pointed out that Haldi is conspicuously missing in the inscriptions of Sarduri I and in the earliest ones of his successor, Išpuini (Salvini 1989: 84-85) and proposed that his worship was deliberately introduced as a state cult at about the time that the imperial expansion of Biainili began in earnest (Salvini 1987: 402). Earlier, Haldi does not seem to have been a very important deity in the world at large, at least in comparison to Teišeba and Šiuini. We know that he existed in the Middle Assyrian period because his name appears in a few proper names. He is not found in the Hittite corpus, nor is he mentioned in Hurrian literature of the 2nd millennium BC (Salvini 1989: 83).[9] After Išpuini introduced him to Biainili, there was indeed a close association between Haldi and the ruling dynasty, which included legitimization of the monarchy (Salvini 1989: 80-81). Thus Haldi owes his prominence to the Urartian state, rather than the other way around.

In many respects, the template for the monarchy of Biainili was Assyria, and its kings needed a god who could perform the role that Assur did for the Assyrian Empire. Why Haldi, previously a local deity whose worship was centered in Musasir, was deliberately brought into this role is not clear, but it was certainly not because he enjoyed a wide popularity throughout the area that Biainili was later to conquer. If, as seems likely, the first rulers of Biainili were in fact intruders into the Van basin from the east, it may well be that they favored Haldi of Musasir because of ancestral ties to that area. In any case, Haldi assumed the role of war god and was invoked at the beginnings of military campaigns as well as in the vast majority of royal dedications and construction projects.[10]

[8] 8th century building inscriptions attest to royal agency in construction all over the kingdom. To be sure, many of projects mentioned are cultic, such as *susi* temples and Haldi gates, but there are also fortresses, irrigation systems, campaign inscriptions, and even whole cities, as illustrated by Erebuni. The strong conformity of the sites without inscriptions to the architectural standards of those with inscriptions suggests that they are all being constructed by the dictates of the same authority–it is an architecture for the most part without precedent in the area and it seems unlikely that it was adopted by numerous local authorities simultaneously, on their own volition, and coincidentally with the arrival of Urartian armies in their territory. There is no precedent north of the Araxes for the specific building techniques which appeared there when Argišti I founded the Urartian sites of Argištihinili and Erebuni. The same may be said of the introduction of such other basic elements of the Urartian state assemblage as pottery and bronzes.

[9] For the early history of Haldi see Radner this volume Chapter 17.

[10] Ursula Seidl has called attention to the conceptual similarity of Haldi as portrayed on the Anzaf shield (Belli 1999a: 37-41) to the Mesopotamian Ninurta/Nergal (Seidl 2004: 200). This may have attached itself to the god as part of his new role as a god of empire. I am not entirely convinced that the figure portrayed on that shield does, in fact, represent Haldi. The Anzaf shield, however, is virtually unique in providing a kind of ranked procession of the pantheon and its discovery vitiated many earlier theories about the iconography of Haldi. It dates to the time of the Meher Kapısı inscription and is thus close to the time the state religion was created as such. Later portrayals of Haldi in this form are not to be found in Urartian art. It is possible that an anthropomorphic Haldi is not actually represented on the shield, and the figure at the head of the procession of gods is actually the king, wielding the divine force of Haldi through the blazing weapon, or

In an analysis of the historical significance of the Meher Kapısı inscription, Salvini links the introduction of Haldi with the regularization of an imperial pantheon, consisting of both pan-Hurro-Urartian deities (Teišeba/Tešub and Šiuini/Šimigi), and a variety local deities (e.g. Huṭuini, Ua, and Irmušini) including mountain gods. He sees the syncretistic list of Meher Kapısı as representative of the constitution of the empire (Salvini 1994: 206-207). Significantly, the deity to whom the Erebuni *susi* temple was dedicated, ^{D}Iarša or ^{D}Iubša, is not there, because the territory around Erevan had not yet been added to Biainili (Salvini 1994: 207).[11]

If the Meher Kapısı inscription was intended to be an official pantheon, however, it shows other interesting omissions, which may reflect changes in the empire over time. Most curious is its failure to mention the mountain god ^{D}Eiduru, whom one would assume to be very prominent at any phase in Biainili's history and whose majesty was certainly visible from Van. Eiduru is mentioned as a deity in the Ayanis temple inscription, and is best known as the designation of a mountain which distinguishes the Rusahinili founded by Rusa, son of Argišti, at Ayanis, from the Rusahinili at Toprakkale, which is below Mt. Qilbani. The latter does appear at Meher Kapısı in the form ^{D}Qilibani and has been associated with Zimzim Dağ (Salvini 1994: 207). The fortress of Ayanis is only 27.6 km distant from Toprakkale and, although the terrain obscures one Rusahinili from the other, there is a clear view of the citadel at Van and Zimzim Dağ from the top of Güney Tepe, the slope on which the outer town of Ayanis was built. Where was Mt. Eiduru? The most conspicuous mountain to any visitor of Ayanis is Süphan Dağ, the second highest peak in Turkey, located on the northern shore of Lake Van. Surely if any mountain in Biainili was deified, this would be it. Since it is also plainly visible from Van, it seems inconceivable that it would be left out of the Meher Kapısı list. I believe Eiduru has to be another mountain, more suited to locating Ayanis vis-a-vis Toprakkale, and not so conspicuous as to demand its own god until a major citadel was built below it. For this, Goren Dağı/Ireini Dağı (so marked on Google Earth – the names are not used locally, to my knowledge), whose summit is 4 kilometers away from the Ayanis citadel is better suited than Süphan, the crater of which is 46 km away and closer to other large Urartian sites, like Kef Kalesi/Adilcevaz. In any case, the point is that the god Eiduru becomes worthy of mention only when a state center is constructed in the proximity of the mountain of the same name.

Even more revealing of the relationship of the gods to imperial policy is the testimony of the recently discovered Gövelek inscription of Rusa Erimenahi (Salvini 2002c, CTU A 14-1), which is the missing part of the long-known Keşiş Göl inscription (Salvini this volume Chapter 08). In this sacrifices are made to various gods in connection with actions involving the waters of a dam. Among these is Assur (Salvini 2002c: 138-139). Listed between the 'Gods of the Lake' and the obscure Nalaini, this seems a very odd place to find the supreme god of a rival empire. Salvini's suggestion that it may be a reflection of the more relaxed relations that prevailed between Assyria and Biainili in the last phase of the empire (Salvini 2002c: 139) is all the less convincing if Rusa Erimenahi actually reigned in a time of great hostility (Roaf this volume Chapter 14). I submit that this reference might be better understood if Assur here is not to be construed as the national god of the Assyrian Empire but a purely local god worshiped by some small population residing in the mountains east of Van. It is not unlikely that the people who held Assur in reverence had come to live here from Assyria, perhaps as re-settled deportees.

The essential point is that royally decreed sacrifices were made to gods of the various inhabitants of each locality, as well as to Haldi himself. Haldi inevitably heads the list and his exalted prestige is made clear by the greater number of animals sacrificed to him. but the kings sought to look after the other gods as well. None of these lesser gods has a very wide following geographically. Every time we find a new list of sacrifices somewhere, we also find mention of new gods. Not all of these local gods appear in the official pantheon, if indeed there was one.

šuri. Unlike the gods on animals who follow him. this figure is not wearing a horned crown, and thus might well be human. The idea that Haldi might have been represented symbolically rather than anthropomorphically was explored by Calmeyer (1974, 1979), whose basic idea was not entirely invalidated by his holding to the now discredited view that the *šuri* was a chariot rather than a lance, as the Ayanis excavations have now conclusively demonstrated (Çilingiroğlu & Salvini 1999: 56-59).

[11] The point remains valid whether this deity is local to Erevan or a Luwian import (see above) – the pantheon included local and specific gods of people whose loyalty the state wished to command, but except for the highest level of Haldi, the storm god, and the sun god, did not include more wide-ranging deities.

The unifying elements of the Urartian imperial religion come from the top down, by royal fiat – not from the bottom up though popular belief. Local deities, on the other hand, remain as numerous at the end of Biainili's history as at the beginning. They continue to proliferate with the discovery of new inscriptions and represent the diversity of belief within the empire. While we can say nothing of their fate in the absence of written evidence, it seems apparent that the state cults, as represented by *susi* temples within citadels and locations of sacrifice on rock cut surfaces, died with Biainili. Haldi appears to have perished, at least as a major actor, with the state that elevated him.

Cultural diversity in the Outer Town at Ayanis

One window on the how the population of Biainili at large related to its government is provided by settlements founded by Rusa Argištihi. Admittedly, this cannot provide any kind of paradigm for the kingdom as a whole, because these settlements were only created at toward the end of Biainili's history and probably under very special circumstances. Nevertheless, if cultural diversity can be found even at these focal points of central control at a time when royal building projects were being pursued with more energy than at any other time in the kingdom's history, it would suggests that it was also present elsewhere in the kingdom and at other times. The settlement at Ayanis in particular, which is also discussed in this volume Chapter 06 by Elizabeth Stone, has information to offer on the nature of imperial government in the second quarter of the 7th century.

The first point that discoveries at Ayanis make abundantly clear is that Urartian rulers were still pursuing the same policies of importation of captive populations under Rusa Argištihi as they had earlier. Before the temple inscription of Ayanis (Salvini 2001a: 253-270) was discovered in 1997, this was not fully appreciated. The absence of figures for deported populations after those in the annals of Sarduri II is probably due to changes in writing habits as much as archaeological survival. Later royal inscriptions tend to be more sparing of description than earlier ones and are fewer in number generally. For example, Minua tended to write dedicatory inscriptions for individual buildings, whereas Rusa, son of Argišti, would write one inscription for a whole site. There are thus many more inscriptions of Minua than Rusa, even though the latter clearly did more building. The Ayanis temple inscription is not analogous to the detailed annals of Argišti I and Sarduri II and rather than giving specific figures for prisoners taken in individual campaigns, it summarizes Rusa's whole reign up to the point of composition.[12] He claims to have conquered the enemy lands of Assur, Targuni, Etiuni, Tabal,[13] Qairanu, Hate, Muški, and Ṣiluquni.[14] While the passage that immediately follows this list is obscure, it mentions these people in connection with creating the fortress and settlements[15] – presumably the totality of construction at Ayanis – so it is not unlikely that foreigners made up part of the population there.

[12] As Salvini has demonstrated, this text is but one example of a standard inscription that Rusa used at several sites, including Karmir Blur and Adilcevaz. The texts are not identical. For example, the Adilcevaz text lists captives from ^{KUR}Haliṭu, who do not appear at Ayanis, and the order in which the lands are listed is somewhat different (Salvini 2001a: 286).

[13] This is how I construe ^{KUR}*Tab-la-ni* in Sec VI, line 11 of the Ayanis temple inscription text (Salvini 2001a: 258). It would seem a fitting identification in a list that includes other substantial kingdoms on the order of Hatti and Muški. A similar place name, ^{KUR}*Tab-la-a-ni* appears in broken context in UKN 452 (CTU A 12-4 II). Diakonoff & Kashkai (1981: 83) judge Karagezjan's equation of this with Tabal as 'dubious' and Arutjunjan (1985: 186; 2001: 340) suggests a location northwest of Lake Van at modern Tapeline. This location, however, not far from the site of Kayalıdere, would have been securely within Urartian territory and seems quite inappropriate for an 'enemy' land on the order of magnitude of the other places listed in the Ayanis temple inscription.

[14] The name is very similar to Ṣuluqu, mentioned in an inscription of Argišti, son of Rusa, found in an Armenian church at Tanaat/Thanahat, 17 km west of Sisian (CTU A 11-3, Arutjunjan 2001: no. 411, pp. 324-329). Arutjunjan finds a cognate in the 9th century AD place name Tsluk (Haroutiounian 1982: 92-93) and would locate the land on the north-eastern frontier of Urartu in the mountains east of a line between Lakes Sevan and Urmia.

[15] The use of the plural suggests that the settled area around Ayanis was not considered a unit. The logogram URU is, of course, quite indeterminate of size, and the numerous 'settlements in the vicinity' (URU^{meš} *ša limti*) of Urartian fortresses mentioned by Sargon in his 8th campaign against an earlier Rusa, may well refer to groups of houses or even individual houses scattered in a similar pattern to that seen in the outer town at Ayanis.

Rusa's extensive building projects, mentioned in the same text as this list of captives, clearly demanded massive amounts of labor. An unambiguous statement of settling foreigners, like Argišti I's claim in founding Erebuni, is admittedly absent.

A second point has to do with the level of planning and state-sponsored building in the outer town. There was certainly a good deal of this, but very little of it had to do with the creation of residential buildings. In a magnetic field gradient survey, we were able to identify massive public buildings to the north and south of the citadel. There was also a grid of large walls immediately outside the city gate, which seems to have served as some extension of the fortress area. So far, however, we have only found extra-mural private houses on the upward sloping terrain to the east of the citadel (Stone & Zimansky 2004). The pottery that we found when we surveyed this area and the discoveries we have made in soundings there over the years, all suggest that the houses in this area, known as Güney Tepe, were occupied during the Urartian period only. There would be little incentive to build a house here in the absence of a functioning citadel. Indeed, only about 300 people reside in the modern valley in which Ayanis is located and it appears to have had a more substantial population only in the last years of Biainili. The settlement area on Güney Tepe may thus be regarded as belonging to one period, although we cannot be precise about whether that period lasted twenty years or seventy.

What evidence there is of planning here seems to diminish, as one moves away from the fortress. There are some regularly laid-out structures, conceived apparently as duplexes which were built in an arc facing the citadel. These are the closest buildings that we are confident were purely residential, but they are peculiar in that they lack stabling facilities for domestic animals. People living here appear to have been drawing their subsistence from collective rather than family facilities. Some modifications in the form of benches and external walls were added to the original building plans as time went on, but it would appear that this lower row of houses was indeed planned, probably in conjunction with the creation of the citadel.

In the next step up the slope, it appears that some very large houses were constructed first.[16] We have uncovered most of one of these and a small part of another. The construction techniques here are of the same standard as one sees on the citadels. Walls have what one might call the "standard Urartian" construction, of larger stones on the faces, not worked, but with flatter sides forming a relatively smooth face, and smaller stones in the interior of the walls. The rooms are rigidly rectilinear and the overall plan roughly square. There are both food preparation facilities and stables in the one house we have most completely uncovered. The trash associated with it includes both luxury goods and evidence of writing – a bulla bearing a personal name, so far the only cuneiform we have found in the outer town.

Between these two elegant houses, there are residences that are chaotically arranged and appear to be much more impoverished.[17] The stratigraphic evidence that they were built later than the large houses is clear. The large houses, and indeed the row houses down the slope, are partly cut into bedrock and partly built on artificial terraces. These smaller houses are constructed on trash that came from the larger houses. It would thus appear that the empty spaces between the original buildings were being filled in, after a few years had passed, by people who were building in a variety of techniques. Walls here do not always meet at right angles and generally are made of smaller stones, although there is no consistency whatever. There is a certain amount of cutting into the bedrock, and storage jars are found here as well as cheese-making facilities. The issue of stables is not yet resolved.

As one moves farther up slope and away from the citadel, the architectural variety continues to increase and there are no further indications of formal planning. In our Operation 9, the buildings no longer face the citadel and indeed are not aligned with each other. This is particularly obvious in the area where we found what appears to be Assyrian pottery. The two houses partly excavated there are well constructed and right beside each other, but the orientation of the walls of one is offset approximately thirty degrees from the other (Stone this volume Chapter 06). In Operation 11, higher on the slope of Güney Tepe and nearly as far away

[16] Buildings 1 and 15. See Stone this volume Chapter 06.
[17] Building 3. See Stone this volume Chapter 06.

from the citadel as Operation 9 we have spent the last three seasons excavating a most peculiar building that seems to consist of terrace walls following the contours of the slope and perpendicular walls connecting them to make small rooms. Once again, the building techniques are highly varied, even within a single building. In one room here we found several pithoi, one of which had hieroglyphic markings giving a capacity in the standard units of *aqarqi*, *ṭerusi* and *liš*. One wonders what use one had for these capacity markings in what is otherwise clearly a private house.

The materials we have excavated in the outer town show that the population there enjoyed full access to what are generally considered "Urartian" artifacts (Stone this volume Chapter 06). The distinctive red-polished pottery that has long been the hallmark of the Urartian fortress assemblage is common in the outer town, although it is more common in some of our soundings than others. The jewelry, seals, and even the writing systems (cuneiform and hieroglyphic) of the fortress are also represented by finds from the outer town. We do not find the masses of bronze military equipment that come from the fortress storerooms, but projectile points of the basic Urartian style have been found in almost every sounding. In short, the portable objects of material culture that so neatly coincide with the boundaries of the Urartian state as a whole are prevalent in the settlement. Yet this settlement area is not enclosed by a wall, shows changes throughout time, and, beyond a small core, shows no evidence of central planning.

Let me conclude with one final example of something which speaks to me of both conformity to Urartian norms and cultural diversity within the urban environment. In the summer of 2006 we discovered a burial within the building in Operation 11 described above (Colour plate Ib). The body was of a pre-pubescent child, too young to permit us to be sure of gender. The grave goods appear to speak for Urartian nobility – a belt of a quite common form with rows of repoussé dots was worn around the upper torso and a polished red-ware trefoil jug was placed near the head. Twenty-three bronze earrings, three additional rings found near the waist, and an ivory pendant all speak for an impressive level of wealth. On the other hand, the location of the burial, in a pit carved into the bedrock within a house, is unprecedented. Intramural interments of nobility in Urartu generally take the form of tomb chambers in rock faces; and for most of the people extramural cemeteries, often with cremation, are the rule. Perhaps our burial represents the child of a *nouveau riche* Urartian family, partly, but not fully assimilated. Her parents were wealthy enough to afford the trappings of nobility in the form of a belt and masses of earrings. They placed a standard Urartian jar in the burial. But they did not cremate their child, or put her to rest in an extramural cemetery, choosing instead to bury her in their home, according to the customs of another land.

Archaeology of Empire in Urartu

When one looks only at fortresses, the Urartian archaeological assemblage speaks with the same circumscribed and monotonous voice as the royal inscriptions: the kingdom is a unit created and held together through centralized power and ideology. The circumstances of Biainili's creation and the direct testimony of Assyrian observers suggest that this distorts the reality of an empire that was in fact cobbled together of component parts that did not wholly lose their individuality. The extent of this internal diversity and the degree to which it changed over time are, however, are still open questions. We have sought to investigate this, admittedly in a limited way, in excavating the outer town at Ayanis. The settlement areas here were established with only minimal planning on the part of the ruling authorities, to judge by the layout of the architecture and the construction techniques. There are a few well-spaced residential buildings which seem to have been set up with forethought and constructed to standards that are seen in Urartian fortress architecture and elegant houses at other sites. Most of the houses, however, show no such care in their construction and are arranged with inconsistent orientations. To a certain extent, the inhabitants of all of these made use of what we have termed the "state assemblage" – e.g. polished trefoil jars of red ware, Egyptian blue pigment, iron projectile points and so forth. However, in at least one area, they seem to be using pottery that is not local as well – indeed it has its closest parallels with Assyria (Stone this volume Chapter 06). Remains of animal bones suggest different dietary preferences in different areas. The one intramural burial we have found is conspicuously Urartian

in its furnishings, but unprecedented in its location, since extramural cemeteries are where one expects to find Urartian burials, which are also frequently cremations. None of these indicators are in any way conclusive, but they do at least demonstrate that individuals in an Urartian royal city exercised choices in some aspects of their daily lives and made these choices in different ways, unfettered by the hand of the state. We need more excavations in more varied contexts and ultimately, one hopes, from different periods in Urartu's history, before we can be confident of Urartu's status as a polyglot and cosmopolitan empire.

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Abbreviations

AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHw	W. von Soden 1965-1981. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden
AMI	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*
AMIT	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan*
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
CAD	A.L. Oppenheim & E. Reiner (eds.) 1956-. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Chicago-Glückstadt
CTN 5	H.W.F. Saggs 2001. *The Nimrud Letters, 1952*, Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud V, British School of Archaeology in Iraq, London
CTU	M. Salvini 2008. *Corpus dei testi urartei* Vols. 1-3. *Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia*, Documenta Asiana 8, Rome
HchI	F.W. König 1955-1957. *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften*, AfO Beiheft 8, Graz
IFŽ	*Istoriko-filologičeskij Žurnal [Historical-Philological Journal] Patma-Banasirakan Handes*, Yerevan
I.N.	*Ivories from Nimrud*
IstMitt	*Istanbuler Mitteilungen*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
PNA	*The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAA 1	S. Parpola 1987. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I. Letters from Assyria and the West*, SAA 1, Helsinki
SAA 4	I. Starr 1990. *Queries to the Sun God: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*, SAA 4, Helsinki
SAA 5	G.B. Lanfranchi & S. Parpola 1990. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II. Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces*, SAA 5, Helsinki
SAA 7	F.M. Fales & J.N. Postgate 1992. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part I: Palace and Temple Administration*, SAA 7, Helsinki
SAA 11	F.M. Fales & J.N. Postgate 1995. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration*, SAA 11, Helsinki
SAA 15	A. Fuchs & S. Parpola 2001. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III. Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces*, SAA 15, Helsinki
SAA 16	M. Luukko & G. Van Buylaere 2002. *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon*, SAA 16, Helsinki
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies

Sg 8 Sargon's Letter to the God Ashur. For the text see W. Mayer 1983. Sargons Feldzug gegen Urartu – 714 v. Chr., Text und Übersetzung, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 115: 65-132

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UPD I.M. D'jakonov, 1963. *Urartskie pis'ma i dokumenty* [*Urartian letters and documents*], Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moskva - Leningrad

VDI *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii [Messenger of Ancient History]*

ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*

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